

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT LISBON 01222 SENT SECSTATE SECDEF DIA
DATED MARCH 5.

QUOTE

S E C R E T LISBON 1222

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, PO

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH SENIOR PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE OFFICER

REF: LISBON A-33

SUMMARY: BRIG GENERAL JOSE LEMOS FERREIRA, DIRECTOR OF
TRAINING, PAF, CALLED COLONEL BLACKLEY, DATT, TO REQUEST
APPOINTMENT FOR DISCUSSIONS OF AN UNSPECIFIED NATURE AND
INDICATED A PREFERENCE FOR MEETING IN THE EMBASSY. HE
CALLED AT EMBASSY (DAO) MARCH 3. "DISCUSSIONS" TURNED
OUT TO BE AN ELABORATION OF CONVERSATION THAT HAD BEEN HELD
AT EMBASSY RESIDENCE LUNCHEON ON FEBRUARY 28 (SEE REFAIR).
FERREIRA GAVE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION
WITHIN THE AFM AND ARMED FORCES, AS WELL AS A CHARACTER
ANALYSIS OF LEADING PERSONALITIES WITHIN THE AFM. HE ALSO MADE
SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND JUSTIFIED
THEM ON THE BASIS OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN PORTUGAL.
END SUMMARY

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1. FERREIRA PICKED UP A COMMENT MADE BY THE DCM AT THE FEBRUARY 28 LUNCHEON TO THE EFFECT THAT PORTUGAL SHOULD NOT FEEL THAT NATO WAS DICTATING TO PORTUGAL, AND THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, ACQUISITION OF P-3 AIRCRAFT WAS MANDATORY FOR AN ANTI-SUBMARINE ROLE, BUT RATHER THAT PORTUGAL SHOULD DERIVE ITS NATIONAL GOALS AND DISCUSS THEM WITH ITS NATO ALLIES. FERREIRA SAID WE SHOULD NOT DELUDE OURSELVES THAT THIS CAN OCCUR IN PORTUGAL WITHIN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. ANY ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF THE MODERATES TO CHANGE PORTUGAL'S PRESENT STANCE TOWARD EITHER NATO OR THE U.S. WOULD BE MET BY LEFTIST OPPOSITION AND THE PROPOSAL WOULD STALL. HE SAID WE MUST MOVE PORTUGAL CLOSER TO THE U.S. AND NATO INCREMENTALLY BY UNSOLICITED OFFERS OR SUGGESTIONS WHICH THE LEFTISTS CANNOT OPPOSE LEST THEY OPEN THEMSELVES TO MODERATE CRITICISM. FERREIRA SAYS THE SOVIET BLOC UNDERSTANDS THIS PIECEMEAL APPROACH AND IS ENGAGED IN JUST SUCH AN EFFORT. WE MUST CAPITALIZE ON THE EXISTING TIES IF WE ARE TO TIP THE SCALES IN FAVOR OF THE WEST. FERREIRA EXPLAINED THAT WHAT GENERAL PINHO FREIRE MEANT ON FRIDAY WHEN HE SAID "THERE ARE CERTAIN POSITIONS FROM WHICH PORTUGAL CANNOT WITHDRAW" IS THAT NATO IS A FAIT ACCOMPLI AND SO IS THE AZORES BASE. THESE POSITIONS ARE EASIER TO MAINTAIN THAN IT WOULD BE TO CREATE NEW INTERNATIONAL POSITIONS. HOWEVER IF THE WEST DOES NOTHING TO MAINTAIN THEIR FAVORABLE POSITION THE NIBBLING AWAY PROCESS OF THE COMMUNISTS WILL SUCCEED.

2. FERREIRA CONTINUED TO ILLUSTRATE HIS LOGIC BY SAYING THE AFM HIERARCHY IS BUILT ON TWO PILLARS - ONE MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM, THE OTHER POLITICAL. IF THE U.S. SHOULD PUT SOME F5E AIRCRAFT AT MONTE REAL (PRINCIPAL FIGHTER BASE) THOSE YOUNG ACTIVE LEFTISTS WHO TODAY ARE CONCENTRATING ON POLITICS WOULD BE FACED WITH A DILEMMA. IF THEY CONTINUED WITH THEIR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES THEY WOULD BECOME TECHNOLOGICALLY OBSOLETE IN THEIR CHOSEN PROFESSION AS OTHER OFFICERS WHO WOULD BE CLAMORING FOR ASSIGNMENT TO THE NEW AIRCRAFT SUPPLANTED THEM IN QUALIFICATION AND REPUTATION. THE SAME THING APPLIES TO THE ARMY, SAYS FERREIRA. GIVE THE CAVALRY UNITS 30 OR 40 MODERN ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS OR TANKS AND WATCH THE CHAIN REACTION IN THE OFFICER CORPS. HERE HE CAUTIONED, "NOT TOO MANY, JUST A FEW TO KEEP THEM OCCUPIED AND STICK WITH THE CAVALRY UNITS, -- THEY ARE THE MODERATES."

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COMMENT: TO APPRECIATE FERREIRA'S LOGIC ONE MUST REALIZE THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE MILITARY ACADEMY IN PORTUGAL AND THE VIEWS, MORES AND APPROACH TO THE MILITARY PROFESSION OF THE REGULAR ARMY OR AIR FORCE OFFICER IS MUCH CLOSER TO THE PRE-1939 LUFTWAFFE MENTALITY THAN TO ANY MODERN FORCE CONCEPT. END COMMENT. FERREIRA, REACHING FOR ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF HOW TO PRACTICE COMMUNIST NIBBLING IN REVERSE SAID, "TO MOVE THE ARMED FORCES A LITTLE CLOSER TO U.S./NATO WE SHOULD OFFER A

DISTINCTIVE PERSONNEL WEAPON THAT IS NATO ORIENTED. 6000 TO 7000 AUTOMATIC RIFLES TO EQUIP THE PARATROOPERS (AIR FORCE) COMMANDOS (ARMY) AND FUSILLIERS (NAVY) WOULD RAISE THE PRESTIGE OF THOSE UNITS AND WELD THEM MORE CLOSELY TO NATO." BUT, SAID FERREIRA, TO BE EFFECTIVE THE OFFER SHOULD BE MADE IMMEDIATELY; BEFORE THE ELECTIONS, AT LEAST AS A MATTER OF PROPOSAL. AND THE OFFER MUST BE WITHOUT COST. "IT IS NOT POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE FOR THE AFM TO SUPPORT PURCHASE OF WEAPONS TO SUPPORT THE FASCISTMZ

3. WITH RESPECT TO PERSONALITIES FERREIRA SAID:

(A) "KISSINGER CAN NOT DEPEND ON COSTA GOMES." HE IS AS SLIPPERY AS A WATER SNAKE; NOT A BAD MAN, NOT A COMMUNIST OR EVEN A LEFTIST, BUT A MAN FIGHTING ONLY FOR HIS PERSONAL SURVIVAL. COSTA GOMES WILL ALWAYS BE ON THE WINNING SIDE REGARDLESS OF WHICH SIDE WINS.

(B) PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES IS A MAN WHO CAN BE MANIPULATED BY APPEALS TO EMOTION, PATRIOTISM AND IDEALISM. WAVE YOUR ARMS AND SHOUT SLOGANS AND HE'S WITH YOU; APPEAL TO LOGIC AND HE'LL FALL ASLEEP ON YOU.

(C) LABOR MINISTER COSTA MARTINS IS SURROUNDED BY THE PCP IN THE DEPT OF LABOR AND HE PROTESTS TOO MUCH THAT HE IS NOT A COMMUNIST. HE'S YOUNG, INEXPERIENCED AND THEY ARE PLAYING ON HIS PRIDE WHILE THEY USE HIM. HE CANNOT BE TRUSTED TO THINK IN TERMS OF THE ORIGINAL PRECEPTS OF THE AFM PROGRAM, THE PCP IS CONSTANTLY INTERPRETING IT FOR HIM. (AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: I TOO HAVE FOUND COSTA MARTINS YOUNG AND NAIVE.)

4. CONCERNING THE COORDINATING COMMISSION (CC) HE SAID

LT COL CHARAIS TAKES HIS ORDERS FROM COL VARELLA GOMES AS DOES CONTREIRAS AND JUDAS. THEY ARE OVER THEIR HEADS AND SO BLINDLY FOLLOW. MAJOR CANTO E CASTRO, MAJOR PERREIRA PINTO AND CAPT PINTO SOARES ARE BOYS WHO VACILLATE. ONE DAY THEY
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RECOGNIZE THE PROBLEM AND ARE COMMITTED TO RECTIFYING THE SITUATION, THE NEXT THEY'RE OFF ON A NEW TANGENT GUIDED BY VARELA GOMES. CAPT VASCO LOURENCO IS THE FAITHFUL ADHERENT OF VARELA GOMES AND THE PCP LINE.

5. WITH RESPECT TO THE JUNTA THE SITUATION IS BETTER. THAT IS WHY THE MODERATES VOTED MORE POWER TO THE JSN. ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO IS THE LEADING LEFTIST PROPONENT WITHIN THE JUNTA AND AS RED AS HIS NAME. AZEVEDO IS LEFTIST BUT NOT COMMUNIST. MENDES DIAS, PINHO FREIRE AND FABIAO ARE MODERATES. FISHER LOPES PIRES IS NOT A STRONG PERSONALITY AND GENERALLY FOLLOWS FABIAO. COSTA GOMES PLAYS HIS OWN GAME AND TRIES TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH ELEMENTS.

FERREIRA, IN RESPONSE TO THE OBSERVATION THAT FABIAO SEEMED

VERY CAUTIOUS IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WEST AND THE U.S. IN PARTICULAR, SAID THAT FABIAO IS UNDER TREMENDOUS PRESSURE FROM THE LEFTISTS AND HAS NO CERTITUDE AS TO THE SUPPORT OF THE LARGELY MILICIANO (RESERVE) LED ARMY UNITS. HE IS DOGGEDLY TRYING TO RESIST THE LEFTWARD PUSH AND TO REORGANIZE THE ARMY INTO A COHESIVE, DISCIPLINED FORCE. HIS VISIT TO ROMANIA WAS MADE AT THE INSISTENCE OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE. HE ACQUIESCED TO IMPROVE HIS IMAGE WITH THE LEFT AND IN THE HOPES HE COULD USE THE MODEL OF A WELL DISCIPLINED ARMY TO FURTHER HIS GOALS. CAPT. LOURENCO'S ACCOMPANYING FABIAO WAS NOT BY FABIAO'S CHOICE.

7. IN CONCLUDING HIS REVIEW WITH DATT FERREIRA SAID THE POLITICAL BALANCE WITHIN THE AFM IS PRECARIOUS, AND INTERNAL MODIFICATION OF THAT BALANCE IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. IT IS PRECISELY THAT, HOWEVER, WHICH MAKES THE BALANCE SO SENSITIVE TO OUTSIDE PRESSURE. THE U.S. AID PROGRAM IS A FORM OF PRESSURE WHICH SERVES AS A HOLDING POINT FOR THE MODERATES. U.S. ECONOMIC AID HAS ENABLED THE MODERATES TO SUPPORT ANTUNES' ECONOMIC PLAN AND TO OVERRIDE THE LEFTIST DEMANDS FOR A MORE "PROGRESSIVE" PLAN. MILITARY AID THAT ELEVATES THE POWER AND PRESTIGE OF THE MODERATELY ORIENTED ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES, IF FORTHCOMING IN A TIMELY FASHION, WILL HAVE THE SAME MODERATING INFLUENCE. THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF EMPLOYING THE AID PRESSURE IS IN THE CONTEXT OF NATO WITH A CLEAR VISIBILITY OF THE U.S. IN THE BACKGROUND.

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8. COMMENT: I HAVE ASKED DATT TO SUBMIT ABOVE VIEWS IN SOME DETAIL BECAUSE THEY PROVIDE FOOD FOR THOUGHT. THERE IS NO QUESTION IN MY MIND THAT ECONOMIC AID HAS BEEN OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL WEAPON. HAVING MADE THAT BREAKTHROUGH FIRST, I THINK WE NOW NEED TO TURN OUR ATTENTION TO MILITARY AID, WHICH PROPERLY RPT PROPERLY DONE, MIGHT BE AN EVEN MORE POTENT WEAPON.
CARLUCCI UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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